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The

OLD PEWTER MUG

AND
OTHER POEMS
by
Melvin J. Messer

A HOLIDAY SOUVENIR
of the
WESTERN BREWER
- 1903 -



H. S. Rich & Co.

Chicago and New York







MELVIN J. MESSER

THE
OLD PEWTER MUG

AND OTHER POEMS

BY
MELVIN J. MESSER

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177 LA SALLE STREET
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PUBLISHERS' ANNOUNCEMENT

In presenting this souvenir to the readers of THE WESTERN BREWER, the publishers wish to acknowledge their indebtedness to the author, MR. MELVIN J. MESSER, for his many poetical contributions during the last decade. It was because of the hearty approval with which they have always been received that it was decided to reproduce them in acceptable form as a holiday contribution to the literature of the brewing industry.

THE PUBLISHERS.

December, 1903.



AUTHOR'S PREFACE

During a life mainly spent among the cares, labor and worriment of business, it has been my custom to solace myself and forget the petty annoyances of the day by indulging a natural propensity for rhyming. Whether the infliction of my verses upon the readers of the various papers and magazines in which they have appeared has been more of a hardship to them than it has a pleasure to me, I leave those readers to determine.

A long connection with the brewing industry has led me to search the pages of the modern poets for lyrics dealing with the products of the brewer's art, and although many have sung in masterly fashion the praises of ale and beer, the examples are not numerous; and the ground, it seems to me, has been but imperfectly covered. Admiring, as I do, the energy and progressiveness of our modern brewers and the splendid results their ambition and resourcefulness have brought forth, it has been a labor of love with me to celebrate the nectar they create in verse, more or less faulty, doubtless, but at least sincere. These lyrics have appeared from time to time in the columns of *THE WESTERN BREWER*, and it has pleased the publishers of this remarkably well conducted journal to rescue them from their previous condition of fugitive pieces and collect them in the present tasteful and presentable shape. If they serve in the smallest degree to dignify, to beautify and to elevate the business in which my hopes and interests all are centered, I shall, indeed, be abundantly repaid.

THE AUTHOR.

CHARLESTOWN, MASS., October 1, 1903.

DEDICATED
TO THE
BREWERS OF AMERICA
AND TO ALL TRUE LOVERS OF
“THE BARLEY BREE”

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THE OLD PEWTER MUG.

Old and battered and dingy and dull,
Dinted and worn by the buffets of time,
Empty and leaky, useless and null,
Was ever a subject less fitted for rhyme?
Was ever a subject more homely and bald?
Yet round it there cluster the mem'ries of years,
The laughter that gladdened, the songs that enthralled,
The rapture of living, the sighs and the tears.

Many a draught of the good, nut-brown ale
Foamed o'er its rim in the century gone!
Yeomen of England, so hearty and hale,
Maidens as fair as the sun e'er shone on
And rosy-cheeked children in life's golden morn,
All quaffed and were glad; but the years sped away,
The mug crossed the ocean, a new world was born
And the Puritan's lamp shed its light o'er the bay.

Forests re-echoed with psalm and with prayer,
Log huts arose, and the struggle began
To live and to love and all burdens to bear
For the Word and the truth and the freedom of man.
The mug oft was dry and the larder stripped clean,
Hunger and thirst did the Puritans know,
Yet was their faith ever pure and serene,
Firm and unswerving through weal and through woe.

Settlements prospered and comforts increased,
Maidens were wed and their children grew up;
Thanksgiving day brought full many a feast,
Never stood idle the tankard and cup.
Pilgrims could drink and pilgrims could pray,
Pray for good things and give thanks when they came,
Use them discreetly and walk the straight way,
Viewing excesses with sorrow and shame.

Many a toast has been drunk from this mug,
Toasts to the loved one, to friends, to success,
In the old kitchen, so cosy and snug,
Where shone the firelight to cheer and to bless.
Liberty flowed in the foam-crested draught,
Hatred of tyranny flavored the beer;
Heroes it made of the reapers who quaffed;
Cannons belched forth and the conflict was here!

Years of sore trial, of battle and blood,
Of treachery, poverty, darkness and doubt,
Dashed o'er their souls in tempestuous flood,
But God fought beside them and hedged them about.
The invader retired; independence was won,
And liberty's flag floated free to the breeze.
Feasting and song told that battle was done
And the mug did its duty in days such as these.

Time fled apace, and the mug, now grown old
And battered and worn (as you've heard in my lay)
Banished, disgraced, to a peddler was sold
Till, from his stock, I redeemed it one day.
Little by little its story I've learned,
Out of old legends and histories dug;
Years have rolled back and lost days have returned,
Their glories revived by the old pewter mug.



BIBO, AUDIO.

Music affects the grateful ear,
Something as drinks affect the palate,
Or as the hungry eye finds cheer,
In works of pencil, brush or mallet.

The titillated nerve responds,
And wider spreads the pleasant feeling,
Till every fiber feels the bonds
So gently o'er the senses stealing.

Thus, when I taste the ginger pop,
Or through a straw sip new-made cider,
They bear a tune in every drop,
Just as a horse might bear his rider.

I hear the country fiddler's voice,
And feet of dancers money-musking,
"Girls, form your sets now, ladies' choice,"
And jigs and reels make glad the husking.

Champagne, bright sparkling in the glass,
Brings thoughts of opera bouffe instanter,
To liveliest strains each shapely lass
Flies round the stage at nimble canter.

Poor Offenbach is dead and gone,
And what a motley crowd comes after !
Yet still the merry tunes roll on
With brilliant lights and limbs and laughter.

Amontillado wets my tongue,
And, like the summer raindrops' sprinkle,
Around on perfumed air is flung -
The soft guitar's ecstatic tinkle.

And mandolins and castanets
Tell tales of warm, voluptuous pleasure,
As Spanish beauties (dangerous pets)
Dance to the peace-destroying measure.

With English ale flow lusty strains,
As "Hearts of Oak" each voice unlimbers,
"God Save the Queen" to heaven attains
And fairly rocks the massive timbers.

Around Tom Bowling's ancient shrine
The baritones tumultuous rally,
While amorous tenor swains combine,
Discoursing "Sally in Our Alley."

And, lastly, when in Kaiser-Bier
I drown my cares, my griefs, my worries,
Rings high the German student-cheer,
And chorus after chorus scurries.

The glasses clink, the songs resound,
The smoke-wreaths rise and float above me,
Here, waiter, quick! another round,
And bring some pretzels if you love me.



BARLEY SONG.

Sweet is the matin voice of birds
At early dawn in summer weather ;
Sweet are the bells of distant herds
At twilight coming home together.
And sweet the brooklet's pearly note
Adown the rocky hollows leaping ;
But sweeter yet the songs that float
In winds o'er fields of barley sweeping.

I love to list, 'mid insect's hum,
While quails are piping in the meadows,
As o'er the hills the reapers come,
And shorter grow the morning shadows,
To music of the rustling grain
And dream of all the coming pleasure,
When we its life juice oft shall drain
And revel in its amber treasure.

Then, as with keen delight we drink
The sparkling nectar, foamy-crested,
While songs go 'round and glasses clink,
And every draught's with joy invested,
I still shall hear, in fitful wise,
The piping quail, the brooklet's flowing,
The insects' hum in chorus rise
With winds across the barley blowing.



THE JUDGE'S DREAM.

The ancient judge passed to the ease and quiet
Of his small study on the second floor,
Where he oft fed his soul on mental diet
Purveyed by caterers of the days of yore.
The shelves were lined with volume upon volume
From Xenophon to Zangwill on the Jews,
And rows of books in serried, solid column,
Here quartos and there journals and reviews.

A Shakespeare lay upon the oaken table,
A Dickens stood upon a nearby shelf;
The judge saw neither, he was barely able
To sink into a chair and fan himself.
All day had liquor cases come to bore him,
A brewery strike was next upon the list;
What irony they should be brought before him,
An old-time, ramrod prohibitionist!

"I wish the whole d——d thing was sunk forever,"
He said, "and that 'twas wholly blotted out
From books, from life, returning never, never!
The world would prosper then, beyond a doubt."
The scent of flowers was wafted on the breezes,
The buzz of bees up thro' his casement crept,
The day was one which every torment eases;
He rested in his Morris chair and slept.

He dreamed an angel came and took his treasures,
His precious books, that seemed a part of him,
That eye had been among his chiefest pleasures,
Dismembered them, and tore them limb from limb.
Each line, each word that told of drink or drinking
Of wine, of ale, of liquor or of beer,
He cut, destroyed, demolished quick as winking,
And, O! what devastation then was here.

His Dickens was a thing of shreds and tatters,
His Shakespeare was a sight to rend the soul;
The poets were like leaves the fierce wind scatters,
And e'en the Bible was not wholly whole.
A wail went up amidst the immolation,
As when a Dryad's limbs were rudely torn:
The conscious volumes felt the desecration
And mournful lay, disheveled and forlorn.

A mighty wave of shame and grief and choler
Swept o'er the judge, and from his lips there broke
The protest of the bibliophile, the scholar,
He started up in fury—and awoke.
His books were there, untroubled and in order,
The setting sun streamed redly on the floor,
The purpling grapes glowed on the vineyard's border,
A brewer's dray went lumbering by the door.



ON BREWERY WALLS.

(*Ballade.*)

On brewery walls no longer would I see
The clumsy trade-marks of a bygone day,
Such as the canny Scot, the Briton free,
The well fed German favoareth alway :
No broad Gambrinus should thereon display
The mighty paunch that slimmer folk appalls,
No ramping unicorn, in grim array,
His fabled horn exalt on brewery walls.

No pomp of heraldry enthroned should be,
Nor yet to simple lettering would I pay
My homage; but would issue forth decree
That cunning artist hands, in loveliest way,
Whether on brick, or wood, or granite gray,
Should paint, where first the morning sunlight falls,
The dove and olive branch, fit sign to stay
And shed its benison on brewery walls.

Fit sign, indeed, to mate the "barley bree"
With meaning deep, and to the world convey
That peace, good fellowship, prosperity
Are found where'er the beer-god holdeth sway,
Black hatred, strife and war all flee away;
The waves recede, the rainbow hope installs,
And every heart throbs out a joyous lay
To see the emblem shine on brewery walls.

ENVOI.

Brewers, incline your ears to me, I pray;
To custom be no longer hopeless thralls,
Nor heed the long-eared critic's dismal bray
At dove and olive branch on brewery walls.

RONDEAU.

Bring me the glass. My storm-tossed soul is fain
To lave itself within the tranquil seas,
Where strife is not, but only grateful ease,
And light, swift fancies, wearying not the brain.

Ah, sweet nepenthe! thou shalt still the pain
Of life's sharp battle and the stings that tease
When love is fickle and the goal one sees
So near at first fades o'er the darkening main;
Bring me the glass.

Yet let no blood-like wine its rim bestain;
Madness and loathing hide within its lees.
The sparkling, amber juice of ripened grain
And wholesome bitter of the hop—they twain—
Deftly commingled, shall my thirst appease;
Bring me the glass.

WHAT THEY DRINK.

The Scotchman loves his Islay blend,
The Celt his "Mountain Dew,"
John Crapaud sips his thin Bordeaux,
John Bull his juice of Oporto—
A heady wine, that, too.

The Hollander imbibes much gin,
The Tartar swills kumyss,
The Pole and Hun adore Tokay,
While Rheinwein flagons all the day
Germania's fair lips kiss.

The Southrons take their Bourbon straight,
The Yankees Medford rum,
The Cubans guzzle Santa Cruz,
And Russians brandy can't refuse,
All over Christendom.

The Spaniard sherry wine esteems,
The prohibitionist
Wets down his poor, misguided clay
With aqua pura (hopeless jay,
He never will be missed).

These drinks are all quite well, sweet friends,
To comfort, soothe and cheer,
But none can fill the weary breast
With deep contentment, peace and rest,
As can the foaming beer.

THE LESSON OF A GLASS OF BEER.

(Ganymede, solus.)

Life is the crystal goblet that I grasp
And hold beneath the silver faucet's nose,
Time, the check spring that nimbly I unclasp,
And joy, or grief, the liquid that outflows.

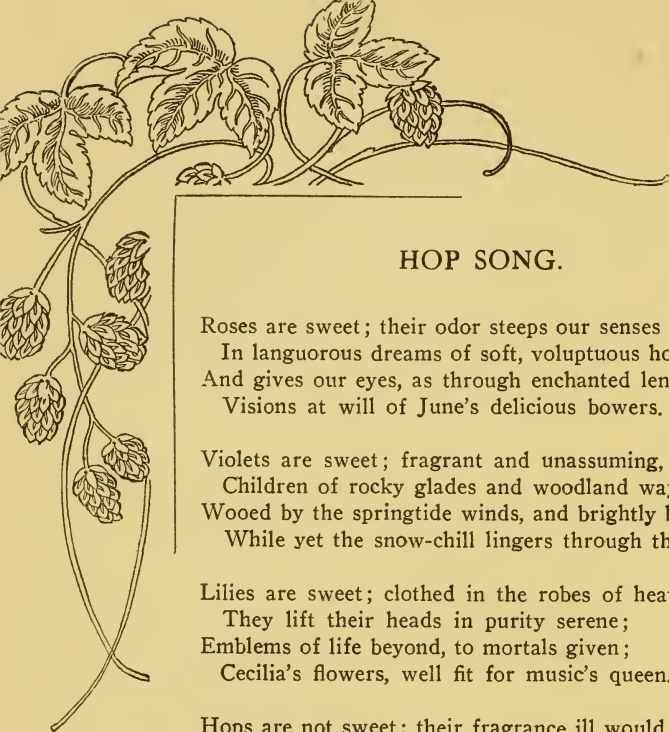
The snowy foam that mantles o'er the glass,
Is the exuberance of youthful days;
Pleasure supreme, elusive, soon to pass,
Leaving the flat, stale beer no man can praise.

Small troubles, cares and sorrows are the motes,
The broken hop leaves and stray seeds that vex
The tapster's soul, that on sheer fineness dotes,
And him with many a doubt and fear perplex.

Excessive bitterness, though pure the draught
(That is the wholesome discipline of fate),
Or sweetness without intermission quaffed
(Monotony of fortune's tranquil state),

Give captious customers rare cause for fault,
But all their complaints I silence with this saw,
The Master Brewer from th' Eternal Vault
Deals out this drink by His, not mortal law.

Be satisfied, O man, give thanks and sip,
Pull out thy purse and pay thy reckoning clear,
Speak words of courage, peace, good fellowship;
Such is the lesson of a glass of beer.



HOP SONG.

Roses are sweet; their odor steeps our senses
In languorous dreams of soft, voluptuous hours,
And gives our eyes, as through enchanted lenses,
Visions at will of June's delicious bowers.

Violets are sweet; fragrant and unassuming,
Children of rocky glades and woodland ways;
Wooed by the springtide winds, and brightly blooming,
While yet the snow-chill lingers through the days.

Lilies are sweet; clothed in the robes of heaven,
They lift their heads in purity serene;
Emblems of life beyond, to mortals given;
Cecilia's flowers, well fit for music's queen.

Hops are not sweet; their fragrance ill would mingle
In blended nosegays, or reward the quest
Of him who forth a royal flower would single
To scatter perfume on a lady's breast.

But pure and wholesome as the breeze of morning,
Balsamic as the odors of the pines;
The clusters fair, their slender stems adorning,
Breathe health's aroma through the clinging vines.

And when their essence in the cup shall sparkle,
And foaming beer shall make the weak heart strong,
When lights shall glow, and evening shadows darkle,
We'll sound the praises of the hop in song.



BY WHAT RIGHT, CHURCHMEN?

By what right, churchmen, ye of narrow creed
And wide phylactery, in measured speech,
Do ye deny humanity's prime need
And place in utter darkness, out of reach
Of all sweet offices of Christian faith,
Those who like not your churches and your priests,
Your close communion, and the look which saith,
Get ye without, and consort with the beasts?



Your temples choke them with their stifling air,
Their charnel smells and death-in-life repose,
Whereto your preachers every week repair
To tell to Him whose piteous blood still flows,
His duty; and instruct Him in the dire
Damnation that His strong right arm should deal,
The blood, the slaughter and the lakes of fire
That all mankind save them, th' elect, must feel.

Shall not the man who travels straight the road
That leads through weal and woe to life beyond,
In thankfulness to God for gifts bestowed,
In constant faith and adoration fond,
In deeds of charity to men unknown,
In secret orisons, by men unheard,
Who knows no church, no creed, but rests alone
On the sheer fastness of his God's own word;—

Shall not he taste the crystal draught that flows
From out the stricken rock for all mankind?
He who was gen'rous, even to his foes,
Who dried the orphan's tears and led the blind,
Who held the cup of water, in Christ's name,
To lips that thirsted; shall he writhe and burn,
While ye, white-robed, look placid on the flame
From heaven's high palaces, without concern?

“FEEN-MÄRCHEN.”

In childhood's days, when elves and fays were real,
When wide-eyed wonder walked with me alway,
When goblin myths and marv'ulous tales ideal
Haunted my nights and filled my head by day,
My strongest faith (and even now it tarries)
Was pinned upon the deeds beneficent
Of kindly, busy, dainty little fairies,
Who came o' nights and at the cock-crow went.

They changed the poor boy's attic, cold and dreary,
Into a glowing scene of warmth and light,
They filled the slumbers of the toiler weary,
With charming dreams of fortune and delight.
They did the work the tired maid was dreading,
They brought the sighing lover hope and joy,
They made more merry yet the peasant's wedding,
And filled with sweet unrest the maiden coy.

* * * * *

I still believe, as I have said, in fairies
That love mankind and strive our lives to cheer,
That make us all their beneficiaries;—
They dwell in every foaming glass of beer,
They lightly dance upon the sparkling liquor
And calm our restless souls with gentle wile,
Renew our strength and make our hearts beat quicker;
Give truce to care, and cause e'en grief to smile.

A BALLADE OF BEVERAGES.

Throat-tickling vintage of fair Champagne,
Thou art, for certain, a false, false friend;
Heating the young blood, firing the brain,
Scattering wits to the world's farthest end.
Does frail woman trust thee? Heaven forefend!
Each glittering drop will be matched by a tear,
Each sip by a sigh that her bosom will rend;
There is no beverage so blessed as beer.

Distillate fragrant of tropical cane,
Whether Jamaica or Santa Cruz lend
Flavor and strength to thee, oft and again
We in the punch-bowl thy spirit shall blend.
Pineapple, lemon and orange shall spend
Their juices delicious. Hark! What do I hear?
"My head, O, my head!" ('Tis next morn, comprehend?)
There is no beverage so blessed as beer.

Essence seductive of grape or of grain,
Eau de vie, usquebaugh, Bourbon, attend!
Ye for deception and fraud I arraign,
Ye on swift punishment well may depend.
Put down shall ye be, for such is my trend,
Though for my viscera much do I fear.
Would that my habits of life I could mend;
There is *no* beverage so blessed as beer.

ENVOI.

Princes, as onward your journeys ye wend,
Accept my advice if ye look for good cheer,
And tie to your heartstrings the message I send—
There is no beverage so blessed as beer.

IN ENGLAND, 1700.

The nut-brown maid stood 'neath the pent,
While creaked the tavern sign;
From out the tap-room came the scent
Of punch and hot mulled wine.
Her eyes were hazel, and her hair
Of sunniest chestnut braid;
O! never was a lass more fair
Than was the nut-brown maid.

A cavalier drew hasty rein,
And checked his foam-flecked steed,
His blood flowed faster through each vein
When he the girl did heed.
"O pretty one," to her he cried,
"With toil and thirst I fail,
Go, bring me quick thy master's pride—
A mug of nut-brown ale."

Under the pent again she stood
While deep the rider quaffed,
And in her brown cheek glowed the blood
And 'neath their lashes laughed
Her hazel eyes to meet his look,
And Cupid did prevail,
For many a draught of love he took,
And only one of ale.

FESTINA LENTE.

The poet seized in haste his pen,
His brain with glowing fancies teeming.
He dipped it in the ink and then
A glory o'er the page came streaming
For just one stanza. There he stuck;
His "Ode to Friendship, Peace and Plenty"
Seemed born to mischief and hard luck
With just one chance for life in twenty.

His wild eyes rolled in dumb despair.
The muse was deaf to supplication;
He strode the room, he tore his hair,
Then bellowed like a bull of Bashan.
At length there shot athwart the night
A cheering ray of brilliant luster,—
"Go bring me wine in goblets bright,
Around it sparkling fancies cluster."

Now coursed new vigor through his veins,
His pen frisked nimbly o'er the paper,
To Pegasus he gave the reins,
And shorter grew his midnight taper.
He paused at last, the song was done,
'Twas brimming o'er with love's sweet trances;
Of peace and friendship there was none,
But war and passionate romances.

He tore the parchment shred by shred,
He cooled his fevered brow, and slumbered
Till smiling morn her fragrance shed
And all the hours of night were numbered.
Then, with a foaming tankard nigh,—
Emblem of friendship, peace and plenty,
He wrote an ode that ne'er will die.
Take counsel, bards. *Festina lente.*



THE MANTLE OF GAMBRINUS.

Kind charity's said to cover
A multitude of sins,
But, all the wide world over,
Chiefly at home begins
(And ends there, too). So wins
The tongue that doth malign us,
And wisdom round him pins
The mantle of Gambrinus.

Through it no poisoned arrow
Of slander finds its way,
No lies our souls to harrow,
No insults to repay.
Though cold and bleak the day,
All smiling we resign us,
And warm and peaceful stay
'Neath the mantle of Gambrinus.

No hate of man nor brother,
No envy finds a place;
Malice and every other
Discordance hides its face.
Plus is each saving grace,
Each moral blemish *minus*
Within the kind embrace
Of the mantle of Gambrinus.

AN EPISODE.

Life is uncertain, and so is wealth,
And so is position and other things,
But honest labor and robust health
Are riches that tarry and take not wings.
The broadcloth coat and the varnished boot
To-day may laugh at the toiler's jeans,
To-morrow be changed for the convict's suit
And the gold-bowed glasses frame sterner scenes.

A fat, sleek banker came down the street,
And a tall, pale broker walked by his side
With stately carriage, as was most meet,
With pious coldness and godly pride.
Each Sunday saw them the church within,
And heard their coin in the plate to clink.
Their lives were flawless, free from sin,
And neither was ever known to drink.

A workman's daughter ran out in haste
With pitcher in hand for the noonday beer,
For not a mouthful the man would taste
Till foamed in his goblet the liquor clear.
She ran plump into the banker stout,
Nearly carrying him off his pins,
Causing some language not half devout,
As well as a pair of abraded shins.

"Pest on these sots!" cried the two as one—
"Dirty, contemptible, soaked in beer,
Pest on the brewers, father and son,
On drinking and drinkers! God help us clear
Each brewery and beer shop away from our land."
And onward they hurried to office and bank,
But the workman smiled as he took from the hand
Of his daughter the pitcher, and joyful drank.

Next day the banker, disguised, fled the town,
And his bank went to ruin, stripped to a cent.
Widows and orphans God's curses called down,
And clamored and wept round the door whence he went.
The broker eloped with a deacon's young wife,
Leaving his margins decidedly queer.
The air with disaster and failure is rife,
But the workman's daughter still goes for the beer.

PHYLLIS AND GLADYS.

(*A Study.*)

Phyllis wears a cool, white lawn,
Gladys shines in silk ;
Phyllis' face is tanned and brown,
Gladys' white as milk.
Phyllis' eyes are Saxon blue,
Gladys' glint of Spain ;
Phyllis likes a foaming stein,
Gladys sips champagne.

Phyllis loves the birds and flowers,
Courts the mountain breeze ;
Gladys in a hammock lies
Underneath the trees.
Phyllis likes a moonlight walk
Down a quiet lane ;
Gladys seeks the ball-room's crush,
Diamonds—and champagne.

Both the maids are very fair,
One has gold, as well ;
Yet down in my heart I feel,
Why I scarce can tell,
Life were happier, better far,
With Phyllis to remain
And quaff her beer, than Gladys choose,
And riches—and champagne.

CHANSON À BOIRE.

The sunlight's cup the lilies drain
And roses sip the dew,
The thirsty earth drinks deep of rain,
Then shines with splendor new.
The bee drinks honey from the flower,
Deer seek the river's brink;
Examples such have muckle power
And why should we not drink?

On us the sparkling barley bree
Its blessed moisture sheds;
A benison, rich, full and free,
Descendeth on our heads.
What though yon clock the hours shall toll
And little stars shall wink.
While Ganymede fills the bowl,
We'll drink and drink and drink.

So long as hand can clasp with hand,
So long as hearts beat true,
So long as friend by friend shall stand
And brewery men shall brew,
We'll raise the foaming tankard high
And glass on glass we'll clink;
Gambrinus we will glorify
And drink and drink and drink.



CLUBS.

(A Burletta.)

I. 300 B. C.

When Caius Flaccus Gracchus, in the palmy days of Rome,
Was found *non est inventus* by the matron of his home,
And the old clepsydra gurgled out the hour of 3 a. m.,
She set her teeth and grimly said, "Per Jovis, he's a gem!"

But Caius, full of doubts and fears and old Falernian wine,
Tacked cris-cross down the Appian way, all in the pale
moonshine,

Till the matron grabbed his toga and hissed, "Now, mind
you, bub,

This endeth your attendance at the Ne Plus Ultra club."



II. 1600 A. D.

John Smith, a doughty captain (Odds! how rare and
strange the name!),

Set out to show an Indian chief (Powhatan, known to
fame)

The beauties of fire-water, blanket deeds and all that thing,
Till the noble red man countered and played on the Jack a
king.

"Take this bludgeon, smash his caput," was the order; but
a maid—

His daughter Pocahontas—cried out, "Pa, I'm not afraid;
I'll take him for my husband; and it's such a narrow rub,
I do not think he'll ever want to see another club."





III. 1903 O. G!

The woods are full of clubs to-day of every kind and name,
Of pious clubs and devilish clubs and clubs that play THE
GAME,

There are press clubs and the coal club that boosts up the
anthracite;

Athletic and dramatic clubs and a *few* that run all night.

'Tis said at some they even drink! and gudewives stand
aghast,

As did the Roman matron in the palmy days long past.

Alarm ye not, fair ladies! Ne'er a peril need ye fear:

Just send your husbands to the clubs that serve no drink
but BEER.



L. of C.



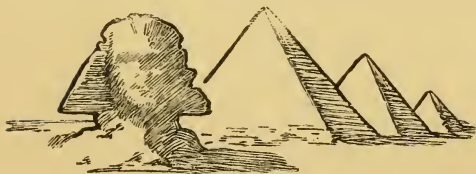
A GRAIN OF BARLEY FROM THE PYRAMIDS.

And so, minute epitome of growth and life,
Thou hast for centuries been snugly lying
Within the mummied folds of some fair wife
Or royal husband, time and change defying.
Thy fellows grew beside the sacred Nile
In sight of Sphinx, of monolith and column,
And, far away, stretched out for mile on mile
The sad, mysterious desert, wild and solemn.

The blue Nile-lily floated on the stream,
The tall bullrushes bent to kiss the water:
I see it now, as in some lotus-dream,
The infant prophet and old Pharaoh's daughter.
And more I see, O ancient barley grain,
The flying centuries still back pursuing,
I see thy fellows in the mash-tub lain;
For Egypt knew the noble art of brewing.

The hop, 'tis true, they had not, but the beer
Was doubtless good and sold for fancy prices;
The "Scarabæus" brand, perhaps, most dear,
Or that named "Ptolemy" or "Pasht" or "Isis."
There's nothing new on earth! The old stays on;
I smack my lips, a twentieth century sinner,
As Thothmes did four thousand years ago
At some "old Scarabæus" with his dinner.

Four thousand years from now an alien race
May roam these vales and hills and mountain ranges,
Build cities at the Rocky Mountains' base
And slaughter lambs where now the Stock Exchange is:
But, like the pyramids, one thing will stand,
The old and new inseparably linking,—
The barley grain will ripen in the land
And there'll be brewing still, and also drinking.





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